

## Migrant support initiatives and young mobile people's needs: outcomes of the YMOBILITY project

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## **Migrant support initiatives and young mobile people's needs: Outcomes of the YMOBILITY project**

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## Abstract

Intra-EU mobility has become increasingly important over the past years. While there are no legal barriers preventing young intra-EU migrants from studying or working in another EU country, many of them face obstacles with respect to their integration into the destination country. Likewise, those who return to their origin countries after having spent some time abroad are also often confronted with diverse challenges. Support measures provided by the EU or national governments and by civil society organisations play an important role in overcoming those obstacles, which might not always match with migrants' and returnees' needs.

Drawing on the outcomes of the collaborative project YMOBILITY, which investigated the relationship between young-peoples' transition from youth to adulthood and their mobility between EU Member States from an international and interdisciplinary perspective, three general findings can be highlighted. First, (re)integration support should include language training and labour market integration measures, but also address other aspects, such as access to housing and cultural integration. Most importantly, efficient support measures need to be tailored to the particular needs of young intra-EU migrants and returnees. Second, support in integration that targets to overcome acculturation issues in the sphere of everyday life is generally offered by civil society, including organisations created by and for migrants and returnees. However, these organisations tend to be underfunded and understaffed, because they are often based on voluntary work, leading to a limited scope and the underuse of their potential. Third, a large group of migrants and returnees are unaware of, or unwilling to use, social support measures, indicating the particular need to provide measures that improve the communication between providers of support and migrants and returnees.

Key words: *EU mobility, youth, policies, social support,*

## 1. Introduction

Young people represent a particular group in society. While they are most likely to be particularly affected by hardship, at the same time they have the potential to initiate progress and change in Europe. Regarding the former, the Eurozone crisis has shown that young people from several EU countries were and are particularly affected by related economic downturns (Glorius and Dominguez-Mujica 2017), which not only impacts in the short-term on life transitions but potentially also in the long-term on intra-generational social mobility (Aksakal and Schmidt forthcoming).

Spatial mobility represents a particular valve for young people, not only to escape economic crisis, but also to obtain education, extend their career prospects, and to experience new lifestyles. It is therefore not surprising that geographic mobility occurs frequently in the young age. Once on the move, some might experience many new challenges, while others, for instance due to their established social support systems, are confronted with fewer barriers.

The YMOBILITY project ([ymobility.eu](http://ymobility.eu)), on which this contribution strongly draws, was concerned with the diverging experiences young movers make in the EU, whereby particularly the effect of migration on different kinds of youth transitions has been addressed. Research within YMOBILITY was conducted in Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. In this context the motivations for intra-EU mobility, as well as the outcomes for individuals and regions in countries of origin and destination, were investigated. A mixed methods approach was implemented, including an online survey with a total of 30,000 young migrants and returnees, a mouse-lab experiment with 540 participants, and 844 qualitative face-to-face or telephone interviews. In order to grasp the full spectrum of transition processes, the research focused on respondents between 16 and 35 years of age in the categories of international students as well as lower-skilled and higher-skilled workers.

Taking the major outcomes of the project into account, this working paper mainly draws on the analysis of support measures for young mobile people within the EU. First, it provides an overview of EU policies and highlights some striking examples of national policies that support migrants. Second, it identifies some characteristics of good practices for the implementation of migrant support measures at the regional and national levels. Third, it presents young intra-EU migrants' and returnees' own judgment of their needs and their perceptions of institutional and civil society support. In the final section, practical policy recommendations are formulated that aim to provide evidence-based suggestions toward more participative and sustainable support policies and initiatives.

The below presented results particularly highlight YMOBILITY's contribution to shedding light on the complex mosaic of existing support provided by various actors at different scales, as well as to uncovering the matches and mismatches of current policies with challenges faced by young mobile people in the EU. One of this paper's central outcomes is the need for more participative approaches that work towards increasing the engagement of young mobile EU citizens in the development of sound migrant and returnee support policies, including the cooperation between formal political institutions and civil society actors. This is especially relevant in the light of our empirical findings, showing that while migrant self-organisations often play an important role in the provision of civil society support, government policies at the EU and national levels so far seem to be less informed by migrants' and returnees' mobility experiences and support needs.

## 2. Flanking Policies and Good Practices for Supporting Young People's Mobility

This section consists of two parts: First, an analysis of some relevant support policies at the EU level and second, a discussion on the implementation of support policies on the national and local member state level by considering examples of good practice.

### 2.1. *EU Policies*

The following table provides an overview of central policies in the areas of migration, family reunification, settlement, integration and return/diaspora policies, and their factual coverage/non-coverage by EU laws.

**Table 1:** Overview of EU Policies

Policy Area	Topic	EU Law
Migration Policies	Mobility within the EU	Freedom of Movement ( <i>Directive 2004/38/EC</i> )
Family Reunification	Mobility within the EU	Freedom of Movement ( <i>Directive 2004/38/EC</i> )
Settlement Policies	Employment	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ( <i>Article 45 and Article 153</i> )
	Recognition of Qualifications	Professional Qualifications Directive ( <i>Directive 2005/36/EC</i> ) and ( <i>Directive 2013/55/EC</i> )
	Education	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ( <i>Art. 165 and 166</i> )
	Research	ECC Treaty ( <i>Article 130F</i> )
	Healthcare	EU Regulation ( <i>1408/71</i> )
	Social Security	regulated on the member state level
	Housing	regulated on the member state level
	Fiscal Policies	regulated on the member state level
Integration Policies	Measures and Programmes	regulated on the member state level
Diaspora and Return	Measures and Programmes	regulated on the member state level

**Source:** Authors' compilation based on MacÉinrí and McGarry, 2017

EU **migration policies**, which include policies in regards to family members, are regulated through the Directive 2004/38/EC on the freedom of movement. While the right to move between Member States is not restricted for EU movers and their family members, it is limited to three months before one has to apply for residence permission. **Permissions for settlement** exist for workers, self-employed people, providers of services, students and their family members, and for job seekers, whereby **permanent residence permissions** are given after five years of residence. Regarding the protection of rights of employees, the EU Labour Law regulated in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, Article 153, defines the rights including those related to working conditions and obligations of EU workers (European Commission 2017).

**Education**, including training and research within the region, represents a key EU concern and was regulated under the Lisbon Treaty Article 165 and 166. Furthermore, the Bologna Process was launched in 1999 in order to build a European higher education area. In addition, educational programmes such as Erasmus+ have been created by the European Commission in order to support intra-EU student mobility, international training, teaching staff exchanges, international work, and volunteering (European Parliament 2017).

The **recognition of knowledge, skills, and competences** and increased transparency across Member States has been used as a strategy to further foment mobility in the region. To this end, adopting the Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC has reformed the professional qualification recognition process. The implementation of diverse tools, such as an online database for the provision of information on equivalence of qualifications between Member States, has in particular significantly facilitated qualification recognition. It is worth noting that one major goal in the previously noted Bologna Process was to improve the recognition of qualifications in higher Education in Europe.

**Research** has also been prioritized as a strategic area in EU law. Article 130F of the European Economic Community Treaty established the objective "to strengthen the scientific and technological basis of European industry and to encourage it to become more competitive at international level" in 1986 (European Union 2010). The European Union's Research Framework Programme Horizon2020 represents the biggest research and innovation programme in Europe, and within these the Marie Skłodowska-Curie and European Research Council (ERC) funding schemes embody significant measures for supporting young researchers in the region.

**Healthcare** across all Member States is regulated by the EU Regulation 1408/71, which states that all EU-28 citizens shall 'be subject to the same obligations and enjoy the same benefits under the legislation of any Member State as the nationals of that State'. This means equal access to primary healthcare across Member States, which was achieved through the European Health Insurance Card (EU 2017a); however the form and level of access is nationally regulated.

Regarding **social security**, the EU provides a common legal framework to protect the social security rights of intra-EU movers within the EU 27 as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. However, the rules on the coordination of social security do not substitute national systems with a single European one. Therefore, Member State countries are free to decide to whom insurance is provided under the particular national legislation, including the types of benefits and under what conditions they are granted (EU 2017b).



Finally, it is worth noting that neither **integration** nor **diaspora and return** are currently regulated on the EU policy level, but remain in the domain of Member State level policies for several reasons. There are recent efforts on the EU level in regards to integration. For instance, the *Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals* represents an endeavour to help Member States create and strengthen their integration policies toward non-Europeans. The European Partnership for integration seeks also to promote the incorporation of refugees into European labour market through involving refugees in the private sector (European Commission, 2018). However, these efforts are far from a comprehensive EU integration policy (Raffaelli 2017).

## 2.2. Policies at the EU Member State Level

National laws regulate **employment**, including access to the labour market, assistance and protection of workers, in many EU countries. However, some differences exist between the national contexts. For instance, while in Sweden EU movers have the same right as Swedish citizens in the access to the labour market, in Spain non-citizens are excluded from occupations in some central public spheres. Moreover, some countries such as Spain and Ireland provide **special employment services** through authorities at the regional level. These provide next to national employment services an additional support for migrants and return migrants in finding an occupation.

**Integration**, including the access to **housing** as a central part of migrants' incorporation, is diversely covered in national policies within the EU. For instance, Germany and Sweden have been exposed to a high influx of humanitarian migration in recent years and therefore significantly increased their budgets to accommodate migrants, including EU movers into society (OECD 2017).

With regard to housing, some EU countries have implemented **social housing policies**, although with variable levels of invested resources. In Germany, for example, next to the offer of social housing there are also financial benefits for low income segments of the migrant population. In many cases access to housing is formally regulated by the principle of **non-discrimination**, which is particularly the case in Sweden and Germany. An exception is Ireland, where non-UK citizenship and (self) employment or job seeking are prerequisites for accessing social housing. Moreover, in Germany, Spain and Italy there are also **regional initiatives** in addition to national (social) housing policies that run in parallel. These regional measures in Spain address immigrants in particular, and explicitly consider European migrants in Germany.

Moreover, it is notable that a large portion of financial resources in the previously mentioned countries and in the UK are spent for subsidising **the tuition of language courses**. In particular for Germany, these courses are sometimes aligned to certain occupations and sectors of the economy, such as the construction sector. Moreover, resources for integration in some countries are increasingly allocated to the **municipalities** in order to more effectively address education and training needs, such as for the cases of Sweden (Government Offices of Sweden 2017), or Ireland (Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration 2017). In addition, a **new integration law** was adopted in Germany at the end of 2016 that especially but not exclusively focused on the incorporation of refugees. More recently, in public discourses there was an increasing demand for implementing a new immigration law in order to attract more efficiently highly-skilled migrants from non-EU countries to Germany (Mayer 2017). This has been pursued by the recent government by developing a legislative proposal, aiming to provide additional residence permissions for foreign professionals and job seekers, abolish priority checks, and accelerate the recognition of foreign qualifications (BMI 2018).

Finally, it is striking that **cultural integration** is supported less in comparison to labour market integration. In the UK and Germany, for instance, cultural activities among migrant groups are mainly based on **self-funded civil society activities**.

**Social security** is also an area that varies among EU countries. Access to social entitlements, for instance, is ensured in Ireland and the UK after three months of residence. This differs from Spain where social security begins when migrants register as job seekers, and Sweden where social security is granted on equal terms with citizens for all migrants with at least a one year residence permit. An exception to these national policies is Germany, where migrants who are unemployed or self-employed and who do not receive benefits on the basis of previous work are not permitted to access long-term unemployment benefits within the first five years, although they can receive temporary benefits for a maximum of one month (German Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs 2017). From a comparative viewpoint this means that **diverse eligibility criteria** for access to social benefits exist in the Member States. For instance, in Germany access depends on previous social insurance contributions, while in countries like the UK (Bruzelius et al. 2016) and Ireland social benefits are generally available to people in need.

**Diaspora and return** represents a particular interesting policy realm at the national level. Political measures to support diaspora communities are outlined in several countries. These include financial support for training programmes, internships, professional specialization courses, and language courses in Spain, tax exemptions in Italy, migrant organisation

support in Ireland and Latvia, funding for social projects developed by diaspora groups in Romania, and the institutionalised provision of relevant information from the destination and origin countries in Slovakia. Finally, return policies are relevant at the national level. Almost all studied countries especially aimed to **attract their skilled and high-skilled emigrants back home** or were involved in a combination of attraction measures and support of qualified persons after return. In Spain, in addition to policies to attract potential returnees, return migrants are supported in finding employment while incentives are provided for companies in the Southern region to recruit returnees. In Romania, return policies are divided into two spheres. On the one hand, training as future entrepreneurs is provided for return migrants and on the other hand trained returnees and returnees with particular abilities are supported in creating start-ups through the provision of mentoring services and financial support.

### 2.3. *Good Practices in EU Migrant Support*

Different governmental, civil society, migrant or returnee-based support measures for distinct categories of young mobile people exist at all levels of governance and in various spheres of life. The efficacy of these measures might be related to the particular national contexts in which they are implemented. However, there are certain characteristics that might be of universal relevance and that are therefore transferable into other national contexts.

While language training (Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody 2017) and labour market integration (OECD 2015) are of high importance, good practices in migrant support measures are often characterized by their comprehensive nature and through offering **support in various areas of life**. For instance, higher-skilled and lower-skilled migrants might have different expectations with respect to their stay. While high-skilled migrants often move for lifestyle reasons and to enhance their careers, lower-skilled migrants often move out of the need to make a living. A wide range of support measures therefore needs to respond to the different needs of people whose motives for their stays abroad vary.

As the example of Germany shows, the range of support measures responding to those needs might include not only counselling services in migrants' native languages but also the organisation of social events. These activities tend to be organised by civil society organisations, and often by **established migrants or returnees who share similar experiences** (Kyrieri and Brasser 2012). The case of Spain shows, long-established returnee support organisations need to adapt to new migration realities and **accompany young people during their migration trajectory**, including provisions to support the preparation for their stay abroad and their potential return.

There is evidence that these organisations often operate within the constraints of scarce financial and personnel resources, and therefore have few means to overcome their limited geographical scope as single civil society initiatives (MacKenzie et al. 2012). These limitations are worsened by the prevailing lack of an efficient **network structure** of migrant and returnee support. One positive example is the case of Latvia, where the position of regional remigration coordinator was recently established. The coordinator is charged with several tasks in order to match potential returnees' skills with existing employment offers. These include on the one hand creating **individual return offers** for Latvians living abroad, which not only cover employment opportunities but also family-based services such as information about housing and educational opportunities. On the other hand, the coordinator also deals with the **creation of a database for expatriates and returnees**.

Brain waste, that is the mismatch of existing qualifications and occupations migrants are involved in in host countries, can be an important career challenge for migrants in destination countries and a barrier for territorial development in origin countries. Against this background, measures that address **mobile people as individuals** appear more efficient for avoiding brain waste and unfavourable secondary effects than overarching policies designed for all types of migrants. A good practice case is represented in Ireland, where training measures that build upon migrants' individual skills and foster the applicability of their talents in the context of the Irish labour market were perceived as useful. Likewise, for the case of international students in Sweden, the support for free movers who do not generally benefit from the supportive structures of the Erasmus scheme has been shown to be of high importance.

In sum, the discussion about some EU and national level policies and their implementation reveals the following support potential: With respect to the policies, it can be observed that some are regulated on the EU level, while many others are regulated at the Member State levels, and some policies are found on both levels. All these policies directly and indirectly support intra-EU movers and sometimes explicitly include young mobile people, and seem to be reasonably important and useful. However, because there are diverse policies and initiatives on the supranational, national and local levels, they often do not interact coherently. This holds especially true for policies and initiatives aimed at young movers and returnees. Therefore, it can be argued that they represent a piecemeal approach to migrant and returnee support in the EU.

With respect to the examples of good practice in different national contexts, some general patterns in the availability and efficiency of migrant and returnee support policies were revealed. The discussion showed the heterogeneous nature of the provision and use of

government support measures. Broadly speaking, two forms of government support for intra-EU migrants in destination countries can be distinguished: social support measures for the general public, and particular migrant support programmes. With respect to the former, social benefits provided by national governments are generally accessible for intra-EU migrants, as the EU Directive on the Freedom of Movement prohibits discrimination on the grounds of nationality among EU citizens. In addition, research results from Germany, the UK and Sweden show that social benefits available to EU citizens are often underused by young mobile people in need of support. As discussed in the next section, there are different reasons for intra-EU migrants' reluctance to access national social benefit schemes.

### 3. Young Migrant and Returnee Viewpoints on Needs and the Provision of Support

Young mobile people in the EU do not have the same **level of consciousness** about various offers of support. That is, young migrants often lack detailed knowledge about public policies and initiatives originated by EU institutions, national or local governments, or civil society. Our analysis reveals that at least three different types or groups can be identified: a) A relatively small number of young mobile people with no or **very low levels of awareness** and knowledge about policies and initiatives supporting them, even if they made use of them (e.g. ERASMUS+); b) Young mobile persons who indeed have a **superficial understanding** of policies and initiatives but did not use them due to the lack of clarity about access, the detailed conditions for application and potential benefits, and perceived high bureaucratic processes in the application or the perception that others are more in need; c) Some young interviewees who were **well-informed** about existing policies and initiatives, particularly those personally involved in intermediation jobs between migrants and relevant institutions.

These circumstances are also linked to the **perceptions of different challenges** and to particular **strategies to counteract these barriers**. With regards to employment, several migrants from Latvia and Romania were recruited by **brokers** and have experienced different degrees of **abuse** because these agencies had undermined basic labour rights. Some Spanish and Romanian migrants in Germany have argued that employment agencies have on several occasions provided **jobs that were not consistent with their education or professional skills**. This was frequently perceived as **discrimination** by the young migrants. As noted previously, the **EU labour law** has defined a legal threshold for working conditions as well as the right to knowledge access and consulting for workers, and the law complements the initiatives taken by individual EU countries policy by providing minimum

standards (European Commission 2017). In addition, some Member States such as Latvia implemented a virtual platform to review the credibility of recruitment agencies. However, these efforts still seem to be insufficient and are unable to substitute **a coherent and comprehensive EU policy** regulating labour conditions, including **systematic legal control of brokers** as well as institutional actors and mechanisms to better inform migrants about the reliability of these agencies.

As noted earlier, with regards to integration policies, our findings show that in countries like Sweden, Germany, and the UK, there is strong **emphasis on general language training**. However, language courses that are **tailored for the specific needs of migrant groups**, such as those related to certain occupations or for certain realms of everyday life (e.g. dealing with teachers in schools or with bureaucratic institutions), are almost absent. Moreover, there seems to be a huge **deficiency in supporting cultural integration**. This is of particular concern, because young intra-EU migrants often aim to develop their personality and acquire informal skills by increasing their level of self-confidence and opening up to new cultures and new experiences.

Finally, it seems significant to recognise that integration in Europe is to some degree interwoven with **migrants' transnational bonds and activities** and **cosmopolitan viewpoints**. These transnational and cosmopolitan realities were frequently reflected among the interviewed young EU migrants.

Regarding transnationality, many young interviewees argued that their cross-border relations and practices have a high priority in their lives abroad. Especially migrants in the UK, Spain and Ireland maintain these ties through circular migration patterns.

With respect to cosmopolitan viewpoints, several EU return migrants from Spain, Romania, and Ireland argued that they feel more attached to Europe or the world than to their country of origin. However, many integration policies as well as institutions at different scales do not explicitly consider transnationality in the creation and implementation of strategies for integration. Furthermore, **housing** represents a central aspect in migrants' integration in host countries (Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas 2016). Especially in Sweden, Germany and the UK, finding adequate housing was been perceived as highly challenging by several migrants, indicating **inequalities in the access to shelter**. In Germany, for instance, remote housing was associated with a disconnection to colleagues and peers, thus leading to **feelings of isolation**. In the UK, adequate housing was discussed in relation to affordability but also to difficulties in obtaining a bank account, which represents a precondition to renting an accommodation.

There were also interesting comments by migrants regarding the reception of financial benefits from the **social security** system in the relevant countries. Many young movers in Sweden, Ireland, Germany and the UK did not want to receive financial benefits due to **fears of stigmatisation** despite the fact that they were in need of financial support. The necessity of being registered in the population register represented an additional barrier, especially for circular migrants and short-term international students in Sweden. In Germany, the reluctance to apply for financial benefits was also sometimes linked to the **perceived intense discourses on ‘welfare tourism’**.

Finally, there were also some interesting insights on the use and non-use of support for return. Several returnees in Latvia argued that they were **not aware of many return measures**. Others, including returnees to Slovakia and Romania, found that the **efficacy** of these measures was not very high and some interviewees believed that the **financial incentives were too low** and therefore were perceived as relatively unattractive for potential applicants. In fact, return policies in the studied EU Member States are often not able to (re)attract the brightest and most successful migrants because this migrant population faces difficulties in finding the same or similar wages and career perspectives in the country of return.

Additionally, it was observed that in some country cases return measures are **limited in their scope**, such as in Ireland, or initiatives are focused on a few strategic occupations. This was also the case in Spain due to the concentration on only certain marginalised return regions. Some young returnees considered these circumstances to be **unjust** because the policies and initiatives focus certain return and are not accessible to others. From this vantage point, it is also striking that policies and initiatives are mainly dedicated to high-skilled migrants and international students, thereby excluding many migrants in other categories.

## 4. Conclusion and Outlook

This contribution highlighted that EU policies represent an important supranational legal framework, but considerable variations across member states in the implementation of these exist. It is worth noting that additional regional and local varieties within Member States can exist, which contributes to an increasing complexity. This also holds true for the integration policies of young European movers. It has been illustrated that most effective policies address multiple dimensions of integration simultaneously, including cultural integration. However, in reality existing policies in this and in other spheres often tend to be too

fragmented to achieve substantial objectives in the short term. Against this background there is a need, especially in the highly dynamic field of human movement, to engage in a periodic evaluation of existing policies. This might involve giving more priority to research-public-policy dialogues.

From this vantage point academic analysis can be effectively utilised to thoroughly inform both the public and policies on current social dynamics in the EU. Policies that are informed by academic knowledge can help to minimise misinterpretations and misuse of information related to human mobility and strengthen social cohesion in the EU, including through coherent migrant support measures. Innovating support policies can be resource intensive (e.g. requirements of structural change) and face other major barriers (e.g. political controversies), and are therefore not always realistic about what can be achieved in the short and medium term. Nonetheless, there are some relatively easily achieved ‘wins’ that can be retrieved from the previous discussion, such as strengthening the inclusion of civil society, especially by including migrant organisations into the design and implementation of integration measures, as well as fostering more coordination among state institutions and civil society initiatives.

The YMOBILITY results indicate that young mobile people require support with respect to their integration into different parts of society. Based on these results, the following reflections mainly embrace the areas of labour market and cultural integration, housing, and social benefits for migrants and returnees.

#### *Labour market integration*

Access to the labour market often represents a priority for young intra-EU migrants and returnees, as well as for governments. Thus, there is a need for **stronger inter-linkages between different organisations that support access to labour markets in the origin and destination countries**. These networks could then also be utilised to enhance the often poor knowledge about existing migrant and returnee support initiatives. In order to protect the rights of workers and to avoid their exploitation, a **strict control of labour brokers in origin and destination countries** is necessary. Efforts could draw on EU employment law and on already existing good practice examples. In order to match existing jobs with the skills of young intra-EU migrants and returnees, there is a need to **strengthen the exchange of information through institutional networking** between different parts of destination countries, including core and periphery regions. As many young intra-EU migrants tend to move to core regions and/or big cities, supporting their moves to peripheral regions in



destination countries might enhance the potential of filling job vacancies on the one hand, and bring more people into adequate employment on the other.

### *Cultural integration*

There is a need to acknowledge that young Europeans are not only mobile for economic reasons but that lifestyle also increasingly plays an important role. A holistic view on the mobility experience requires **support efforts in various areas of life**, which should ideally be interconnected. Civil society activities and **migrant self-organisations** play an important role in this realm, which should be made **more visible** and strengthened through, for instance, the provision of **financial support**. Skills in the language of the destination society play an important role in achieving societal integration in different spheres of life, and language training offered in many countries is important. Nevertheless, migrants as individuals with different skills, life experiences, and expectations often also have different needs. **Language training tailored for various groups of migrants** (students, high-skilled and lower-skilled workers) with varying time budgets and occupational needs for language skills can offer a solution and strengthen inclusion. Changing migration realities need to be acknowledged by creating societies in which young mobile people do not stumble over bureaucratic procedures. This requires the need for not only effective institutions but also for the general public to be informed about and prepared for the particular situation of newcomers in societies. Measures might include the **provision of official documents in different languages** as well as the **training of clerks** with the aim of sensitizing them to the fact that bureaucracies function in different ways in different national contexts. An **exchange of information** about the opportunities and challenges related to mobility among young people, such as the exchange initiated by the YMOBILITY team in schools and other educational institutions as well as information dissemination among the general public, can also contribute to raising awareness.

### *Access to housing*

The YMOBILITY outcomes show that access to housing represents a significant challenge for young intra-EU migrants. This is not only related to the structural lack of living space, which needs to be addressed in the long-term, but also to bureaucratic obstacles. **Information about rights and obligations with respect to renting a living space** in the destination country, as well as a platform where prospective mobile people can connect to local initiatives that support young mobile people in finding adequate housing before moving can provide more opportunities in planning and finding shelter.

### *Access to social benefits*

The YMOBILITY results stress the underuse of social benefits by intra-EU migrants, particularly in those countries where public discourses about ‘welfare migration’ prevail. There is thus a need to clearly communicate EU citizens’ rights of access to the welfare system in the country in which they reside, both to young mobile people and to the general public. Young intra-EU migrants should be informed about their rights to access social benefits and to use the financial support provided in times of economic hardship. **Language and cultural orientation classes could be used as a medium to communicate these rights more effectively**, and provide information about ways of making use of them. **Young people should be made aware of EU citizens’ rights and duties with respect to social benefits** in the context of intra-EU mobility. The provision of information before young people become mobile, for instance while they are in school, can contribute to this goal among mobile and non-mobile parts of societies. The provision of **non-monetary support** in the form of advice and the provision of access to information is of high importance for young mobile people in the EU. Initiatives, including **civil society organisations and migrant self-organisations** that in many cases seem to offer this support should be fostered and acknowledged, and in turn supported by national and supra-national policies.

### *Policies for return migrants*

While integration efforts into destination societies are important, policies for those who aim to return to their country of origin after their mobility experience should be fostered at the EU level. The provision of **economic opportunities** using the knowledge and skills gained abroad will not only facilitate re-integration into the society of origin, but also in **periphery regions**. Nation-wide **networks of information** can contribute to the successful re-integration of returnees. Origin countries often focus on re-attracting high-skilled young mobile people living in another EU country. As return is in many cases driven by non-economic motives, **opportunities for lower-skilled returnees** with respect to the (re)integration into the labour market and into their society of origin should therefore also be fostered.

### *Outlook: Designing support policies based on migrants’ and returnees’ needs*

The results discussed in this working paper are based on the experiences and perceptions of young mobile people in the EU. This first-hand information represents an **assessment of policies ‘from below’**, i.e. from the perspective of those people for whom the policies and support measures are designed. It can be argued that their perceptions are the most valuable source of information because they are experts on their own lives, and they

represent the whole range of experiences through which intra-EU mobility shapes young people's lives.

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